

PLUMB LINES AND PRODUCTIONS

FOR MANY PEOPLE THEY HAVE NOT EVER USED A PLUMB LINE OR “BOB”. IT IS A TOOL USED BY THE ANCIENT EGYPTIANS FOR DETERMINING THE VERTICAL OF A BUILDING, PYRAMID, WALL OR CANAL SOME 4000 YEARS AGO. THE PLUMB LINE REMAINS IN USE TODAY THOUGH THERE ARE ELECTRONIC DEVICES DELIVERING VERY ACCURATE RESULTS, BUT BASED ON THE SAME PRINCIPAL.

NOW HERE IN THE READING FROM AMOS TODAY THE LORD IS HAVING A CONVERSATION WITH AMOS ABOUT A PLUMB LINE AND SO MUCH MORE. THE PLUMB LINE WAS A DEVICE TO MEASURE HOW STRAIGHT A WALL WAS, HOWEVER GOD IS PLACING A PLUMB LINE IN THE MIDST OF HIS PEOPLE – ISRAEL. I BELIEVE GOD KNEW WHAT THE RESULTS OF THE PLUMB LINE WOULD BE. **ISRAEL WAS SO FAR FROM PLUMB WITH THEIR BELIEFS AND ACTIONS THAT JUST LIKE A WALL THAT WAS OUT OF PLUMB THAT WOULD HAVE TO BE DESTROYED, ISRAEL WOULD SUFFER.**

THIS ALL MAKES FOR AN INTERESTING STORY, BUT WHAT HAS IT TO DO WITH ANY OF US? MAYBE THE QUESTION SHOULD BE **“WHAT WOULD BE THE RESULTS IF GOD DROPPED A PLUMB LINE AT THIS TIME ON MY LIFE?”** NOW I WANT TO BE CLEAR HERE, GOD WAS MAKING THE JUDGMENT, NOT AMOS. **WE MUST REMEMBER WE HAVE ABSOLUTELY NO FOUNDATION ON WHICH TO STAND AND PROCLAIM JUDGMENT ON ANOTHER PERSON – NONE!! THAT IS GOD'S JOB NOT OURS.** FROM THE CRIMINAL ON THE CROSS TO THE WORK OF THE LABORS IN THE VINEYARD ALL PAID THE SAME, GOD IS TELLING US DON'T JUDGE, DON'T JUDGE.

WE DO HAVE THE FORGIVENESS AND GRACE OF GOD JUST LIKE THAT OTHER PERSON WE MAY NOT LIKE AT ALL. DOES THAT GIVE US FREE REIN TO DO WHATEVER WE WANT AND THEN SAY TO GOD “SORRY, DIDN'T MEAN TO DO THAT”. NO, IT IS GOD'S DESIRE FOR US TO LIVE A LIFE BY WALKING IN THE SPIRIT AND DOING THE RIGHT THING. AN OLD HYMN SPEAKS Search me, O God, my actions try, and let my life appear as seen by Thine all-searching eye— To mine my ways make clear. **THE ENTIRE HYMN SPEAKS TO OUR SPIRITUAL WALK AND HOW WE CAN REMAIN “PLUMB” IN GOD'S WAYS WHEN WE SEEK HIM.**

THE PLUMB LINE MEASURES THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN WORDS AND ACTIONS OR THINKING AND DOING. INSTEAD OF BEING BLESSED, IT IS BEING A BLESSING, OUR FAITH AND OUR WORKS AND OF BEING HOLY AND HOLY LIVING. THERE IS A DIFFERENCE IN EACH OF THESE. **JESUS IS THE PLUMB LINE BY WHICH OUR “WALLS” ARE MEASURED.** HIS LOVE, HIS SERVICE, AND HIS HONESTY, HOW MUCH OF THOSE ARE IN OUR DAILY LIVES. **JESUS IS ALSO A BUILDER OF OUR CHARACTER** IN HELPING TO BUILD AND KEEP OUR WALLS STRAIGHT AND PLUMB. HOWEVER, WHEN WE REFUSE TO CHANGE OUR WALLS THEY BECOME OUT OF PLUMB AND THAT “WALL” OF OUR LIFE MAY HAVE TO BE TORN DOWN AND BUILT ANEW. BY THE SPIRIT AND THE GRACE OF GOD IT IS POSSIBLE. **WE MUST BE WILLING TO COOPERATE AND DO OUR PART TO BUILD THAT WALL OF OUR LIVES STRAIGHT AND STRONG.**

THERE IS NOTHING COMFORTABLE ABOUT GOD'S PLUMB LINE. IT IS EASIER TO AVOID THAN TO FACE. IN GROWING TO GODS' PLUMB LINE, WE HAVE TO COME FACE TO FACE WITH OUR SINFULNESS. THAT IS WHY SOME PEOPLE DON'T MAKE TIME FOR CHURCH, DON'T MAKE TIME FOR BIBLE STUDY, DON'T MAKE TIME FOR PERSONAL DEVOTIONAL...TO RISKY TO SPEND TIME WITH GOD BY OURSELVES, WON'T FORGIVE THEIR SOMEONE FOR THE PAIN THEY CAUSED THEM, WON'T APOLOGIZE FOR THEIR

TRANSGRESSIONS, WON'T ACKNOWLEDGE JESUS AS LORD OF THEIR LIVES BECAUSE IT CONFLICTS WITH THE LIFE THAT THAT THEY WANT TO LIVE. WON'T GET ON THEIR KNEES AND PRAY TO GOD, WON'T OPEN THEIR MOUTHS AND WORSHIP GOD, WON'T ACKNOWLEDGE THEIR CALLING, WON'T LOOK AT THE MAN OR WOMAN IN THE MIRROR ...BECAUSE IT'S NOT COMFORTABLE.

ONE OF OUR DAUGHTERS WILL SOMETIMES CALL AND ASK US TO PRAY FOR SOMETHING, BECAUSE SHE FIGURES WE ARE "CLOSER" TO GOD. NO, JUST BECAUSE SOMEONE ANSWERS A CALLING ON THEIR LIFE DOESN'T MEAN THEY SOMEHOW HAVE AN INSIDE TRACK OR PRIORITY SHIPPING FOR THEIR PRAYER REQUEST. WE ARE ALL IN THE SAME BOAT AND IT IS LABELED "SINNER", BUT FORGIVEN!!!

THE PLUMB LINE VISION IS IMPORTANT IN AMOS, AND IMPORTANT TO US TOO. FIRST, **WE NEED THE PLUMB LINE TO KNOW WHAT IS TRUE AND STRAIGHT, AND SECOND, MORE IMPORTANTLY, WE NEED TO ALIGN TO IT.** WE STUDY THE SCRIPTURES, NOT JUST TO KNOW GOD AND HIS WILL, BUT TO ALIGN OURSELVES WITH HIS WILL. THE BOOK OF AMOS IS THE CALL OF GOD FOR MAN TO RETURN TO HIM AND HIS WAYS.

THE BIBLE IS NOT AN ENCYCLOPEDIA TO INCREASE OUR KNOWLEDGE. IT IS NOT A SELF-HELP BOOK TO MAKE OUR LIVES ON EARTH EASY AND COMFORTABLE. THE BIBLE ISN'T WRITTEN TO GIVE US THE STEPS TO OVERCOMING WORRY, OR TEACH US HOW TO MANAGE OUR FINANCES OR BE SUCCESSFUL IN OUR WORK, OR CONQUERING OUR FEARS..., ALTHOUGH GOD DOES PROVIDE ANSWERS TO ALL THESE LIFE PROBLEMS. **THE BIBLE IS WRITTEN PRIMARILY TO REVEAL THE CHARACTER OF GOD AND CALL FOR US TO RETURN TO HIM AND LIVE LIKE HIM.**

THIS IS IMPORTANT – WE ARE CALLED TO ALIGN OUR LIVES TO THE SCRIPTURES, NOT USE THE SCRIPTURES FOR OUR LIVES, TO FEED MY NEEDS, TO HEAL MY HURTS, TO MAKE ME HAPPY.

DAVID F. WELLS A THEOLOGIAN PUT IT THIS WAY - "we study the bible to listen to his voice that comes from outside our experience, not to listen to our own voice that is crying from within. His word is not one of many. It is the **only word** that has been there from all eternity because it comes from the eternal God. God, then, is not there for our use when we need Him; we are here on earth for His use. He is not there for our benefit as if He were a product; we are here for His service and glory."

THE BIBLE IS NOT AN ENCYCLOPEDIA TO FEED OUR MINDS WITH KNOWLEDGE. THE BIBLE IS THE REVELATION OF GOD – HIS BEING AND HIS DOINGS, HIS WILL AND HIS WAYS. AND WE ARE CALLED TO BE AND TO DO LIKE HIM. IN 2 TIMOTHY 3:16 *"There's nothing like the written Word of God for showing you the way to salvation through faith in Christ Jesus. Every part of Scripture is God-breathed and useful one way or another—showing us truth, exposing our rebellion, correcting our mistakes, **training us to live God's way.** Through the Word **we are put together and shaped up for the tasks God has for us.**"*

TAKE A GOOD LOOK AT YOUR PLUMB LINE. ARE YOU OFF? HOW CLOSE ARE YOU TO LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WILL? CHECK IT OFTEN. WE WANT TO ALIGN OURSELVES TO GOD'S WILL, GOD'S WAYS, AND GOD'S PLAN. WE ARE HERE THIS MORNING TO THANK HIM AND PRAISE HIM FOR WHO HE IS AND WHAT HE IS DOING!!! FOR HIS LOVE, HIS GRACE AND HIS FORGIVENESS.

I MENTIONED DURING MARILYN'S SERVICE YESTERDAY THAT IN MICAH, A MINOR PROPHET OF THE OLD TESTAMENT, CHAPTER 6, VERSES 8 *"But He's already made it plain how to live, what to do, what God is looking for*

in men and women. It's quite simple: Do what is fair and just to your neighbor, be compassionate and loyal in your love, And don't take yourself too seriously—take God seriously.” OR “ He has shown you, O mortal, what is good. And what does the Lord require of you? To act justly and to love mercy and to walk humbly with your God.

HOW COME WE RUN FROM HERE TO THERE AND BACK AGAIN LOOKING FOR WHAT GOD DESIRES? IF WE TAKE TIME TO LOOK IN THE BOOK IT IS THERE IN PLAIN AND SIMPLE LANGUAGE. IS IT “SIMPLE” TO DO - NO!!!! BUT, AS PAUL AND JOHN WESLEY CAME TO REALIZE THAT BUT FOR THE GRACE OF GOD GO I. THERE IS NO WAY WE, YOU AND I, CAN MEASURE UP TO GOD'S PLUMB LINE DROPPED IN OUR MIDST. IT IS WHY WE CAN AND MUST DEPEND ON GOD. **HE IS FAITHFUL AND HIS PROMISES TO US ARE TRUE.** OVER RECENT MONTHS I HAVE HEARD IN PEOPLE'S WORDS THEIR TRUST IN GOD AND HIS PROMISES WHEN FACING VERY DIFFICULT SITUATIONS EVEN DEATH! IT HAS LIFTED MY FAITH, BECAUSE I WOULD BE LYING TO YOU IF I SAID I HAVE NEVER HAD DOUBTS, YOU KNOW HE NEVER DOUBTS US, HIS CHILDREN, AND YOU CAN STAND ON THOSE PROMISES JUST LIKE THE SONG SAYS. I KNOW I AM SURE COUNTING ON HIM!!!!!!

THE LAST THING I WANT US TO FOCUS ON IS THAT WHEN WE WALK IN GOD'S WAYS, WE BEAR FRUIT. THE WORDS AND OUR FAITH BECOME A WAY OF LIFE AND ACTIONS NOT JUST WORDS. I HAVE TOLD YOU OVER AND OVER AGAIN THAT LOVE IS A VERB NOT A NOUN FOR US AS DISCIPLES. PAUL SPEAKS IN COLOSSIANS OF HOW THEY WERE BEARING FRUIT BECAUSE THEY UNDERSTOOD GOD'S GRACE.

WITH THAT GRACE PAUL PRAYS THE COLOSSIANS MAY LIVE THEIR LIVES THAT ARE WORTHY OF THE LORD AND PRODUCE FRUIT IN EVERY GOOD WORK AND GROWING IN THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE LORD. **YOU WILL BE STRENGTHENED AND ENDURE EVERYTHING AND HAVE PATIENCE. THOSE ARE THE “REWARDS” THAT AWAIT ALL OF US WHEN WE FOLLOW GOD'S WAYS, SHOWN TO US BY JESUS CHRIST.**

IN JESUS CHRIST'S OWN WORDS HE SAYS “ *No one lights a lamp and then covers it with a bowl or hides it under a bed. Instead, they put the lamp on a lamp stand so that the people who come in will have enough light to see.*” JESUS IS TELLING US BY LIVING ACCORDING TO GOD'S WAYS WE CAN BE THAT LIGHT IN THE ROOM. WE ALL KNOW THE WORLD NEEDS IT, JUST READ THE PAPER. THERE IS MORE AND MORE DARKNESS IN OUR WORLD. PEOPLE ARE SEARCHING FOR THE WALL, YOU, THAT MEASURES UP TO THE PLUMB LINE.

YOU HAVE THE LIGHT WHAT ARE YOU GOING TO DO WITH IT? OUR MISSION STATEMENT IN THE BULLETIN SAYS “ to make Christ known in the community and around the world.” ANSWER YOUR CALL AND GO, AND SERVE IN WHAT AND WHERE GOD HAS CALLED YOU. AMEN.